

Council on the Status of Women  
October 13, 2011  
Adopted on December 1, 2011

In attendance:

|                  |                 |               |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Jeff Caruso      | Bakula Dave     | Randy Davis   |
| Brenda Fastabend | Camille Fleenor | Ben Greenberg |
| Dawn James       | Tracy Key       | Nicole Neily  |
| Theresa Preda    | Rita Surratt    | Ruth Zajur    |

Staff: Nikki Nicholau

Special Guest: The Honorable Janet Polarek, Secretary of the Commonwealth

Council members were welcomed by the Honorable Janet Polarek, Secretary of the Commonwealth, who administered the oath of office to the Council members.

Since the chairperson position had not been appointed, Ms. Nicholau and Ms. Polarek co-chaired the meeting.

Each council member introduced themselves. Ms. Nicholau provided called their attention to the contact list provided as part of the meeting package and provided a brief introduction of the members not in attendance.

The approval of the June 16 meeting minutes was postponed until the next meeting to allow time for the appointment of the chairman and more formal review by new appointed members.

Ms. Nicholau reviewed the statue related to the Council's role and responsibilities. She provided a briefing on two projects undertaken by the Council over the last 18 months. The [Leadership Resources for Virginia Women](#) is a centralized source of organizations providing leadership opportunities or training for women, which can be found at the Council on the Status of Women's web page. The other project is the sponsorship of a STEM essay contest with the Science Museum of Virginia Foundation. After an overview and discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Preda that the current council move forward with this initiative. After being properly seconded, the council voted unanimously to move ahead. Ms. Preda, Ms. Fleenor and Ms. Key will work on this project. Ms. Nicholau will contact the Science Museum to insure them of the council's continued interest to sponsor the contest.

**Action Item:** Ms. Nicholau to initiate action to move project forward within the next week.

Mr. Greenberg provided an overview of the annual letter that the Council sends to the Governor related to legislative policy issues. The Council concurred that it was not in a position to develop and send the letter this year.

**Action Item:** Ms. Nicholau to send a copy of last year's letter to Council membership

Ms. Polarek led a discussion on what direction the Council might take in the future. She suggested the Council determine what it would like its mission to be; what it would take to accomplish that mission, and potential partnership opportunities with non-governmental organizations. The result was the establishment of four sub-groups to look at the following areas who will report back at the next meeting on possible priorities for the Council's consideration. Council members volunteered to work on one of the sub-groups as follows:

- Economic issues impacting women (macro oriented): Ms. Neily, Mr. Davis, Ms. Key
- Workforce Issues specific to working women (childcare, training to reenter the job market, telecommuting, etc.): Ms. Surratt, Ms. James
- General issues of concern to women (education, healthcare); Ms. Dave, Ms. Zajur
- Issues impacting those at-risk citizens (immigrants and refugees, girls needing positive role models and mentoring, disabilities): Ms. Preda. Mr. Greenberg, Ms. Fleenor, Mr. Caruso, Ms. Fastabend. Ms. Fleenor will act as point person for this group.

Each sub-group will develop no more than 5 areas to be explored addressing the impact on mission, resource requirements and partnership opportunities. Each group will accomplish this goal through e-mail communications and one-on-one conversations. Time will be provided at the beginning of the next meeting for the sub-groups to meet and finalize their report to the full Council.

**Action Item: Ms. Polarek to coordinate and Nikki to send administration priorities to discussion groups.**

**Action Item: Ms. Polarek to connect discussion groups with appropriate administration staffer to help guide discussion.**

Ms. Nicholau provided some cautions on insuring that workgroups did not violate the Freedom of Information Act. Ms. Polarek asked Ms. Nicholau to provide members with a summary of FOIA related to meetings. Ms. Nicholau will also contact those not present about the workgroup to which they would like to be assigned.

**Action Item: Ms. Nicholau to send summary of FOIA meeting requirements to Council members.**

Under new business, the following dates were established for upcoming meetings.

- December 1 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- April 5 – Time TBD
- June 7 – Time TBD
- September 6 - Time TBD
- December 6 – Time TBD

Ms. Nicholau asked for guidance on the funds being held now in the name of the Virginia Women's Hall of Fame. The consensus was that the funds should be put toward to STEM essay contest.

Ms. Polarek stated that the Governor will be appointing a chair for the Council prior to its next meeting in December.

**Action Item: Ms. Polarek to work with Governor to appoint chairperson for Council**

**Action Item: Ms. Polarek to identify appropriate staff person to replace Ms. Nicholau before December meeting.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.